

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 PC-10 IO-13 ACDA-12 /109 W
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R 160816Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9895
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4791

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PDIP, TH, CB
SUBJECT: MORE KHMER BORDER RAIDS ON THAILAND

REF: BANGKOK 4348

1. KHMER ROUGE AND THAI COMMUNIST INSURGENTS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE ATTACKED FEB 15 FROM CAMBODIA INTO THAILAND'S BURIRAM AND PRACHINBURI PROVINCES. IN A FAMILIAR PATTERN, THE TERRORISTS ATTACKED BORDER PATROL POLICE POSTS, SEIZED RADIO TRANSMITTERS, MOTORCYCLES AND RIFLES, AND THEN PUT THE OUTPOSTS TO THE TORCH. POSTS WERE ABANDONED BY THAIS UNDER ATTACK. TERRORISTS THEN RETURNED TO CAMBODIA SEIZING, PRESS REPORTED, FIFTY THAI VILLAGERS AND SETTING A SCHOOL ON FIRE. THAIS EMPLOYED HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS TO HELP REPEL THE ATTACKERS, WHO ARE SAID TO HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES. THESE ATTACKS FOLLOW RAIDS STARTING FEB 7 IN UBORN RATCHATHANI AND TRAT PROVINCES (REFTEL), AREAS WHERE CAMBODIANS STILL SPORADICALLY ARE CONDUCTING HARASSING RAIDS AND MORTAR
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ROCKET ATTACKS.

2. FONMIN UPPADIT, WHO RETURNED FROM PHNOM PENH FEB 2, TOLD THE PRESS FEB 15 THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVES FOR THE ATTACKS IN THE FACE OF GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT HE ACHIEVED DURING HIS PHNOM PENH VISIT TO HALT SUCH ACTIVITIES. HE SPECULATED THAT "BAD COMMUNICATION FACILITIES" BETWEEN

PHNOM PENH AND THE BORDER MIGHT BE THE PROBLEM. IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, IN REMARKS TO THE PRESS, PM KRIANGSAK SUBSCRIBED TO THE "THIRD HAND" METAPHOR TO EXPLAIN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE PERSISTENT ATTACKS. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE "SIAM ORGANIZATION" (KHMER SERAI). AT ANOTHER POINT, THE PM SAID THAT LOCAL KHMER ROUGE INITIATIVE MIGHT HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACKS.

3. COMMENT: THE CONTINUING ATTACKS SO SOON AFTER FONMIN UPPADIT'S APPARENT RECONCILIATION WITH PHNOM PENH ARE BEGINNING TO BE WORSE THAN AN EMBARRASSMENT. RAIDS RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT EITHER PHNOM PENH'S SINCERITY OR ELSE ITS ABILITY TO CONTROL ITS BORDER FORCES. IN EITHER CASE, SOMETHING OF A PALL HAS BEEN CAST ON HOPES FOR BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA. IN THE NEW RAIDS AS WELL AS THE ATTACKS IN UBORN RATCHATHANI PROVINCE DURING THE WEEKEND, THERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BY KHMER ROUGE AND THAI COMMUNISTS. PRESUMABLY, THE ABDUCTED VILLAGERS ARE SUBSEQUENTLY CONSCRIPTED, INDOCTRINATED, OR KILLED. IN TRAT PROVINCE, WE SUSPECT THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE IS ANTAGONISM BETWEEN KHMER ROUGE AND KHMER RESISTANCE FORCES, GROWING OUT OF A DESIRE BY CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT FORCES TO CONTROL THE NARROW STRIP OF THAI TERRITORY (OFTEN NO MORE THAN 500 METERS WIDE) BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SEA. CAMBODIANS COULD ALSO HAVE SECURITY AND CONTINENTAL SHELF RESOURCES IN MIND IN

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CONNECTION WITH THE INCIDENTS IN TRAT PROVINCE.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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